i know what you're gonna be (downtown harks back)
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Julie and The Phantoms (TV)

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Alex/Luke Patterson (Julie and The Phantoms), Alex & Reggie (Julie and The Phantoms), Alex & Bobby | Trevor Wilson & Luke Patterson & Reggie, Alex & Bobby

Characters:
Alex (Julie and The Phantoms), Luke Patterson, Bobby | Trevor Wilson, Reggie (Julie and The Phantoms)

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Luke can kind of be an ass in this, but we love him anyway, Anxiety, Coping Mechanisms, Pre-Canon, Alex growing up, Alex and Luke as exes, Depression, nice Bobby, Hugging, Holding Hands, Growing Up, ends when they die, Alex character study

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by shesthesmoke

Summary

Alex is growing up, even if it doesn’t always feel like it.

Notes

Shoutout to Rai for getting me curious about this show and shoutout to the JATP people for creating a gay character who actually feels like a fully realized gay person. Title from Seventeen by Sharon Van Etten.

Alex realizes he's weird when he's nine, and all the boys want to run off and go exploring except him. Reggie waits up for him sometimes. He loves him for it, but he doesn't think he'll ever say that. Apparently you're not supposed to love your friends, you're just supposed to do dangerous stuff with them. His mom laughs when he explains this to her. He doesn't understand the joke.

Alex realizes he's been missing something when he's eleven, and there's a new kid, and his mom ends up being the one to schedule the play date because he still can't figure out how to talk to new people. Luke's mom drops them off at the arcade. Alex is worried because he's never really been in public without an adult, but Luke is excited and Alex would follow that smile anywhere.

He realizes something's wrong when The Little Mermaid comes out. His sister makes the whole family go see it twice and Alex knows he should be annoyed by this like his dad is. And he knows that if he must be absolutely enchanted by a movie musical for little kids, he should at least see himself as the dashing prince and not the fish out of water with no voice. He doesn't explain himself to anyone this time. When Luke asks him if he saw it, he shrugs him off.

He realizes where he belongs when he's fourteen, and Luke's friend Bobby invites him along to the first rehearsal of a band that doesn't have a name yet. He takes a seat behind the drums when no one else wants to play them and something just clicks. This could be good.

He realizes something's right when he's fifteen, and he kisses Luke for the first time, and they both start crying. It's a good kind of crying, a kind that reminds him of that story they told him when he was younger about how it rained for forty days and cleaned the whole world.

He learns a lot when he's fifteen, like how to stop feeling guilty for sneaking out at night. He doesn't always go to gigs. He goes to

bookstores sometimes, to read books he can never take home. He learns about a whole world, and he doesn't know what to do with it. He doesn't think Luke would get it, Luke won't even tell him if he likes boys or just Alex. He thinks the green haired person behind the counter must be getting annoyed with him for being there so often and never buying anything, but instead they answer all his questions and show him how to fold a zine. He doesn't know why he's so enamored with the concept of little booklets made out of single sheets of computer paper, but he's far from alone in that so he doesn't question it. Tons of people make them just to give them out, apparently. He comes across one about bisexuality and slips it into the front pocket of Luke's backpack, but if Luke ever reads it, he doesn't say anything.

He's sixteen when he and Luke let each other down gently. They're all taking the band more seriously, and it's getting more annoying to navigate all of it. Reggie and Bobby don't worry about the breakup making band practice awkward because they never knew.

Of all the things he's navigating, his anxiety is by far the least fun. Still, he's getting better at it. He figures out how to tell when his brain is just being annoying again by his band mates' reactions. Reggie drifts closer, almost hovering, Bobby drifts farther away, still watchful, and Luke just gets pissed. He still misses the signs sometimes, like one practice a couple weeks after he comes out to his mom where he ends up breaking a stick. Suddenly the music stops and there's nothing left to stave off the memory of that conversation and every worried, pitying, and disgusted look he's gotten from both of his parents since. (She must have told him. She said she wouldn't, but she did. She hates me. They both do.)

Suddenly Reggie's arms are around him, and Bobby is crouched down in front of him and speaking quietly, asking if he wants to go sit on the couch. Luke is still across the room, looking an awful lot like someone whose bus is half an hour late.

This is when he tells them, because if he's going to lose everyone over this then he might as well rip off the bandaid. Reggie keeps hugging

him and tells him he loves him, Bobby gets pensive for a second but ultimately doesn't seem too put off, and Luke doesn't react at all.

Luke has never, ever, expected Alex to hide who he is for the sake of the band, but Alex can tell he's not offering the same support to himself. The worst part is that he knows how Luke is, he knows how Luke gets, and so he knows that he can't intervene in any way that's actually going to help. He resigns himself to just showing up, going after the dream, and holding Luke's hand when it gets bad.

It gets really bad the night Luke runs away from home and Alex finds him struggling with the door to the studio at midnight. Alex stays with him until it's morning and they both need to eat but Luke can't move. Alex sneaks back into the house through his bedroom window, but stops back in before he leaves for school to give Luke a plastic baggie of cereal and brush his bangs off his forehead. By the time Alex gets home, Luke's apparently feeling well enough to be up and about and talking (albeit more quietly than Alex has ever heard him), but it's a couple of weeks before he really seems okay.

They're seventeen when it ends. He reaches for Luke's hand in the back of the ambulance because he's nervous, and he loves Luke and he knows Luke loves him even though it'll never be Like That again. He just wants something to calm him down for a couple minutes while they wait for the paramedic to finish checking Reggie over and tell them it's all going to be okay. Instead, he feels it when Luke goes first.

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